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THE JOYS OF BEGINNING OVER AGAIN

Take no anxious thought about yesterday. That is the corollary of not taking anxious thought about tomorrow. What is done is done.



But what of habit? Is not a man what he is becoming? What if a deed were done badly? Does it not hold in mortmain the deeds of today and tomorrow?

A man will answer such questions according to his religious trust. If he is a materialist, no matter how he may deck out his materialism in pretty words, he will see only in the past the germs of the future. He will bow before the mechanism of life and see in his daily actions only the predetermined results of his and society's activities.

And to a very considerable extent he will be right. There is a spiritual Mendelism which all sensible persons must recognize. Our thoughts and deeds are both parents and children. We cannot defy and we must obey the laws of spiritual eugenics.

But a thoroughgoing believer in the religion of Jesus the Savior is not shut down to any such iron law. To live is more than being alive. To him men are persons not cogs in a world-machine. Each day brings to him adventures in forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward to the things that are before. And therein he finds a joy any Christian can have—a joy born of no flaccid optimism, but of trust in the crucified and risen Son of God.

For we make our new beginning not by exploiting the past, but by drawing on the great reserve of new life which awaits us in the infinite God whose regenerating, revitalizing Spirit we appropriate as we believe that He is in Jesus reconciling us to Himself.

A theology that does not give us the courage to begin over again is a distressingly poor theology however logical its formulas.



Irretrievable sins and blunders there are in altogether too great numbers; sins and blunders we can never undo; disloyalties whose blackness we must confess without extenuation.

But Christian faith refuses to be fettered by remorse or despair. It believes in the forgiveness of sins. It dares repent.



To repent is to begin over again in devotion to the better thing we should have done. That is the very alpha of the gospel.

And we begin over again not with tears but with joy. The very sins and blunders of the past may be caught up into some divine atonement that may make grace and joy to abound. That is the omega of our gospel. When sin abounded grace did much more abound.



Autumn in the natural world is the symbol of the end of an epoch; but in the world of men it is the hour of new beginnings in counting-house, school, and church. Vacations are over, harvests are gathered, plans for another year are being laid.

Let Autumn be a challenge to those of us who have grown weary in the struggle with the evil of the world. As we take up our tasks anew let us dare to rejoice in new opportunities and the renewed challenge of tasks we must face again. For none of us needs labor alone. The Father who has so wonderfully blended new beginnings with the continuity of His work, calls us to no heroism of a forlorn hope but to the joy of renewed service.

“Begin over again! The Kingdom of God is close to you! Believe the good news.”

These are the words with which Jesus himself took up again a work in Galilee he had once before begun in Judea.